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1ST ADD KAPLAN, DENVER XXX CONSULTANTS."

THE BODY OF A MAN SAID TO BE VIDAL WAS FOUND SHOT FOUR TIMES IN THE HEAD AND BURIED IN A SHALLOW GRAVE IN MEXICO IN NOVEMBER, 1961.

VELAZQUEZ SAID THE BODY WAS THAT OF A HEAVY, BALD MAN IN HIS 80'S WITH BAD TEETH AND A STRAIGHT NOSE WHILE VIDAL WAS IN HIS 30'S, ATHLETIC, DARK-HAIRED, FLAT-NOSED AND HAD GOOD TEETH. NO FINGERPRINTS AND NO X-RAYS OF THE TEETH WERE EVER TAKEN, VELAZQUEZ SAID.

MEXICAN AUTHORITIES THOUGHT THE BODY WAS THE REAL ONE, HOWEVER, AND KAPLAN WAS CONVICTED AND SENTENCED TO 28 YEARS IN THE PENITENTIARY.

OVER THE YEARS, A SERIES OF ESCAPE PLANS WERE TRIED. MOST FAILED, AND, ACCORDING TO A SOURCE CLOSE TO THE FAMILY, HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS WERE SPENT IN VAIN ATTEMPTS TO FREE HIM.

ONE SCHEME INVOLVED HIDING KAPLAN IN A LAUNDRY TRUCK. ANOTHER INVOLVED ATTEMPTING TO BRIBE THE PRISON WARDEN TO DRIVE HIM OUT IN THE WARDEN'S PERSONAL CAR TO MEET A WAITING JET AIRPLANE.

ANOTHER MAN CARRIED 150,000 PESOS INTO THE JAIL IN AN ATTEMPT TO BUY HIS RELEASE.

MEANWHILE KAPLAN'S HEALTH WAS FAILING IN JAIL AND MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY WERE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED. HIS SISTER SAID HE WAS SUFFERING FROM EMPHYSEMA, BAD EYESIGHT, LIVER TROUBLE AND OTHER AILMENTS.

"HE MAY BE A VEGETABLE BY THE END OF HIS TIME THERE," WROTE ONE OF THE ESCAPE ARRANGERS REPORTING ON HIS VISIT TO KAPLAN IN THE PRISON. "HE GOES THROUGH PERIODS OF DEEP DEPRESSION, IS AT TIMES DESPERATE IN MIND, THOUGHT AND ACTIONS -- SORT OF GRASPS FOR STRAWS TO TRY AND GET OUT. AS A RESULT HE IS AN EASY MARK FOR SOME FAST-TALKING INMATES WITH A SURE PLAN."

THE PESO TALKS LOUDLY IN MEXICAN JAILS, ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVERS THERE, AND ENABLES A PRISONER TO BUY FOOD, DRINK, WOMEN AND EVEN DRUGS WITHOUT TROUBLE.

THE STORY OF THE ESCAPE, AS PIECED TOGETHER FROM REPORTS IN THE AMERICAN AND MEXICAN PRESS, INTERVIEWS WITH THOSE INVOLVED AND WITH AMERICAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, IS LARGELY AS FOLLOWS:

A BELL PLASTIC TOP HELICOPTER WAS PURCHASED FROM NATRONA SERVICES, INC., A URANIUM EXPLORATION FIRM IN CASPER, WYO., FOR A REPORTED \$25,000. IT LEFT AN AIRPORT AT MCALLEN, TEX., THE MORNING BEFORE THE ESCAPE AND, MAKING SEVERAL STOPS ON THE WAY, ARRIVED IN MEXICO CITY ON THE EVENING OF AUG. 18.

WHEN IT GOT TO THE JAIL, ALL BUT FIVE PRISON GUARDS WERE WATCHING A MOTION PICTURE CALLED "THE ALTAR OF BLOOD," AND IT LANDED IN THE JAIL'S LARGE REAR PATIO.

KAPLAN AND ANOTHER PRISONER, CARLOS ANTONIO CONTRARAS CASTRO, 36, RAN TO THE HELICOPTER. THE PILOT, IDENTIFIED BY MEXICAN POLICE AS ROGER GUY HERSHNER, 29, OF GLENDORA, CALIF., THEN LIFTED THEM OUT OF THE PRISON YARD WITHOUT A SHOT BEING FIRED OR AN ALARM SOUNDED.

TWO HOURS BEFORE THE HELICOPTER ARRIVED, KAPLAN WAS VISITED BY HIS MEXICAN-BORN WIFE, MRS. IRMA VASQUEZ CALDERON DE KAPLAN AND A MAN ONLY IDENTIFIED AS HARVEY ORVILLE DAYLE.

MRS. KAPLAN, WHO WAS LATER ARRESTED, TOLD POLICE SHE LEFT HER HUSBAND AND DAYLE ALONE WHILE THEY "TALKED BUSINESS."

ONCE OUT OF THE PRISON, THE HELICOPTER FLEW TO ACTOPAN, MEXICO. WHERE IT WAS MET BY A LIGHT PLANE PILOTED BY STADTER,

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ACCORDING TO MEXICAN AUTHORITIES.

THE THREE MEN THEN FLEW TO LA PESCA, MEXICO, WHERE CASTRO, ALSO A PILOT, FLEW OFF ALONE IN A LIGHT PLANE, APPARENTLY FOR GUATEMALA.

STADTER AND KAPLAN, THEN CROSSED THE BORDER AND OUTSIDE OF BROWNSVILLE, TEX., RADIOED THEY WERE LANDING AND IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES FOR UNITED STATES CUSTOMS OFFICIALS. THESE OFFICIALS SAID THE AIRPLANE WAS RENTED FROM MCCREERY AVIATION IN MCALLEN, TEX., BUT THIS WAS SHARPLY DENIED BY ONE OF THE COMPANY'S OFFICIALS.

MEANWHILE, HERSHNER FLEW THE HELICOPTER TO A SPOT NEAR THE VILLAGE OF LAURO VILLAR, ACCORDING TO MEXICAN AUTHORITIES, WHERE IT WAS LATER DISCOVERED DESPITE ATTEMPTS TO HIDE IT. HE CAUGHT A RIDE FROM A PASSING MILK TRUCK DRIVER TO COVER THE 35 KILOMETERS TO MATAMOROS, MEXICO, WHERE HE APPARENTLY CROSSED THE BORDER, MEXICAN OFFICIALS SAID.

AFTER THE ESCAPE, RIOT POLICE SURROUNDED THE PRISON. THE PENITENTIARY DIRECTOR AND A LARGE NUMBER OF THE PRISON STAFF WERE ARRESTED.

MRS. DOWIS, ASKED IF SHE HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH ARRANGING OR FINANCING THE ESCAPE, REFERRED ALL QUESTIONS TO HER ATTORNEY VASILIOS CHOULOS, OF THE SAN FRANCISCO FIRM OF BELLI, ASHE, ELLISON, CHOULOS AND LIEFF.

KAPLAN'S UNCLE, J. M. KAPLAN OF NEW YORK CITY, SAID IN A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW: "HONESTLY I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT." HE ADDED THAT HE ONLY KNEW OF THE ESCAPE FROM NEWSPAPER REPORTS.

HE SAID F.B.I. AGENTS HAD VISITED HIM AT HIS HOME AND THAT HE TOLD THEM HIS NEPHEW WAS "AN INTELLIGENT DECENT HUMAN BEING" WHO "ALWAYS MANIFESTED INNOCENCE." HE ALSO SAID THAT IT APPEARED HIS NEPHEW WAS HELD IN JAIL "JUST SO HE COULD BE BLED AS A RICH MAN'S SON."

HE SAID HIS NEPHEW HAD ONCE CLAIMED TO BE AN AGENT FOR THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY. BUT VELAZWUEZ SAID HE DID NOT THINK THE C.I.A. WAS INVOLVED IN THE ESCAPE "BECAUSE THEY WOULD NOT HAVE WAITED ALMOST 10 YEARS TO GET HIM OUT AND THEY COULD PROBABLY HAVE DONE SO THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS."

HE SAID HER PERSONALLY DID NOT BELIEVE JOEL KAPLAN WAS A C.I.A. AGENT, THOUGH HE HAD NO EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM OR DENY IT.

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